REMARKS

Newly cited U.S. Patent No. 4,037,929 to Bricot does not disclose a well, and certainly not a well in which the shape of the accommodated liquid is changed.

As previously noted, the shape of the liquid 42 in applicants' well 50 changes from shape "A" to shape "B", as depicted in Fig. 2. The well 50 is not a confined space bounded on all sides by walls. Instead, the well 50 has an open top to allow the liquid 42 to change its shape.

By contrast, Bricot's liquid crystal lens includes a flat glass wall 1 and a spherical glass wall 2, together bounding a confined space filled with a liquid nematic crystal. The crystal does not change shape; instead, its molecules oscillate and align themselves in different directions. The walls 1, 2 are necessary in Bricot in order to control the thickness of the crystal and, in turn, the direction of orientation of the molecules and the time required for the crystal to switch orientations (col. 2, lines 16-24).

In other words, Bricot's crystal must be confined in a closed space, whereas applicants' liquid lens is unconfined in an open wall in which the liquid is free to change its shape.

Moreover, applicants have claimed the feature of mounting one fixed focal lens 66 or 68 on the variable lens. This feature is not shown or suggested in Massieu, Bricot, or any reference of record. The Examiner indicated that Fig. 2 and paragraphs 0054-0055 of Massieu disclosed such lenses. However, the applicants have carefully reviewed these excerpts and can find no mention of any fixed lenses.

Reconsideration of the rejections in view of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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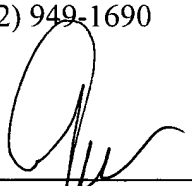

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